

### **REMARKS**

Entry of the foregoing, reexamination and reconsideration of the subject application are respectfully requested in light of the amendments above and the comments which follow.

As correctly noted in the Office Action Summary, claims 22-53 were pending. By the present response, claims 22-30, 47-49, 51 and 53 have been canceled, and claim 45 has been amended. Thus, upon entry of the present response, claims 31-46, 50 and 52 remain pending and await further consideration on the merits.

Support for the foregoing amendments can be found at least at the following locations in the original disclosure: the original claims.

### ***CLAIM OBJECTION***

Claim 45 stands objected to under 37 C.F.R. §1.75(c) on the grounds indicated on page 2 of the Official Action. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 39, from which claim 45 depends, is directed to a method "consisting of" steps (a)-(c). Claim 45, which depends from claim 39, specifies additional details with regard to step (a).

Contrary to the assertions contained on page 2 of the Official Action, there is nothing inconsistent about a dependent claim which provides further details with regard to one of the method steps recited in a closed "consisting of" claim. Thus, the objection is improper.

In order to advance prosecution, and avoid any question in this regard, claim 45 has been rewritten in independent form. Thus, any remaining concerns should be obviated. Reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection is respectfully requested.

***CLAIM REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §102/§103***

Claims 22-30, 47, 48, 49, 51 and 53 stand rejected over *Ito et al*, under either 35 U.S.C. §102(b) and/or 35 U.S.C. §103, on the grounds set forth on page 2 of the Official Action.

By the present response, the above-listed claims have been canceled. Thus, the above-noted grounds for rejection has been rendered moot.

***CONCLUSION***

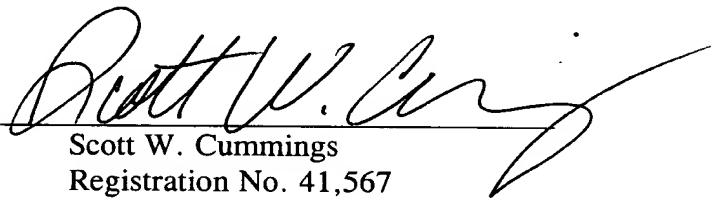
From the foregoing, further and favorable action in the form of a Notice of Allowance is earnestly solicited. Should the Examiner feel that any issues remain, it is requested that the undersigned be contacted so that any such issues may be adequately addressed and prosecution of the instant application expedited.

Respectfully submitted,

BURNS, DOANE, SWECKER & MATHIS, L.L.P.

Date: November 5, 2003

By:

  
Scott W. Cummings  
Registration No. 41,567

P.O. Box 1404  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1404  
(703) 836-6620